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J&K INCOMPLETE WITHOUT PoK, SAYS DEFENCE MINISTER IN AKHNOOR

Rajnath Singh on Tuesday described PoK as India's 'crown jewel' and said that Pakistan is using the 'foreign territory' 'for terrorism'

END TERROR OR FACE CONSEQUENCES, PAK TOLD

Rajnath Singh warned Pakistan to end terrorism or face consequences. "J&K is incomplete without PoK. People there are deprived of a dignified life. Pakistan makes efforts to mislead and provoke them against India in the name of religion. PoK's land is being used for terrorism," he said, adding that Pakistan will have to put an end to its nefarious designs

BATTLE OF AKHNOOR HOLDS SIGNIFICANCE

- The Battle of Akhnoor is significant as the Army successfully thwarted Pak's Operation Grand Slam and advanced towards Lahore
- 'History stands as a testament that Pakistan has lost every war against India — be it the tribal invasion of 1948, 1965, 1971, or 1999 Kargil. In each case, Pakistan has faced humiliation and defeat' **P9**

42,241

SQ KM IS THE GEOGRAPHICAL AREA OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR

CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TIRUCHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARMAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILLUPURAM • KOLLAM • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI

House panel to summon Meta over Zuckerberg election claims

Will seek an apology from the social media giant for 'factually incorrect' statements

RAJESH KUMAR THAKUR @ New Delhi

CHAIRMAN of Parliament's Standing Committee on Communications and Information Technology Nishikant Dubey announced on Tuesday that the panel would summon Meta chairman Mark Zuckerberg over his "factually incorrect" statements about the outcome of the 2024 Lok Sabha poll. The panel will seek an apology from the social media giant for "tarnishing" India's image.

On Monday, I&B Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw had lashed out at Zuckerberg for his remarks. Zuckerberg founded Meta, which owns Facebook.

"My committee will summon Meta for this incorrect information. Incorrect information about any democratic country tarnishes its image. This organisation will have to apologise to Parliament and the people here for this mistake," Dubey wrote on 'X'.

On Monday, Vaishnaw reacted strongly on 'X', tagging Meta and saying, "It is disappointing to see misinformation from Mr. Zuckerberg himself. Let's uphold facts and credibility."

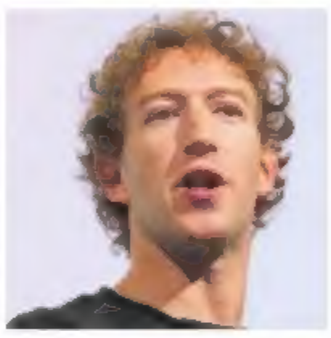
Vaishnaw said: "From free food for 800 million, 2.2 billion free vaccines, and aid to nations worldwide during COVID, to leading India as the fastest-growing major economy, PM Modi's decisive 3rd-term victory is a testament to good governance and public trust."

Vaishnaw said that Zuckerberg's "factually incorrect" remarks failed to acknowledge India's achievements and the strong mandate secured by the government.

The remarks are part of the Meta founder's comments in a podcast with Joe Rogan. Zuckerberg said that 2024 was a big election year globally, and in many countries, including India, incumbents lost the polls.

"There is some sort of global phenomenon — whether it was inflation due to the economic policies to deal with Covid or just how the governments handled Covid — which seems to have had a broad effect not just in the US, but globally, leading to a decrease in trust in incumbents and perhaps in democratic institutions overall," he stated in the podcast.

In the 2024 elections, while the BJP fell short of a majority on its own, its alliance secured enough seats to form the government, reinstating Modi as PM for a third straight term.



TARNISHING INDIA'S IMAGE, SAYS DUBEY

Parliament's Standing Committee on Communications and IT chairman Nishikant Dubey said, "This organisation (Meta) will have to apologise to Parliament and the people here for this mistake."

META FOUNDER'S PODCAST REMARKS

In a podcast with Joe Rogan, Meta founder Mark Zukherberg said that 2024 was a big election year globally, and in several countries, including India, incumbents lost the polls.

Make India climate-smart, predict quakes better: PM

RAJESH KUMAR THAKUR @ New Delhi

PM Narendra Modi called on the scientists on Tuesday to focus on innovating early-warning systems for earthquakes and launched initiatives to make India "climate-smart".

Emphasising the importance of research, he said, "There is a need to develop warning systems for earthquakes and scientists and researchers should work in this direction."

Commemorating the 150th year of the India Meteorological Department (IMD), Modi described its journey as a significant chapter in India's modern science and technology.

Modi also launched 'Mission Mausam', the initiative to boost weather monitoring using state-of-the-art technologies, including advanced radars, satellites, and high-performance computing systems.

He underscored the necessity of making India more "weather-resilient" and "climate-smart". The objective is to improve "the understanding of weather and climate processes and provide air quality data that will help strategise weather management and intervention in the long run".

Commending the IMD's efforts in delivering weather-related services, especially to vulnerable communities, the PM said, "A decade ago, only 10% of the farmers could access weather-related services, but today, this number has risen to over 50%. With the support of IMD, fishermen receive timely info on weather-related aspects."

Highlighting India's regional leadership in meteorological services and disaster management, he expressed satisfaction over "our flash-flood guidance system providing critical info to Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka".

He elaborated on India's initiative, "Early Warning to All", which currently covers more than 90% of the population, and mentioned the 'Meghdoot mobile app', which provides weather updates in local languages.

PM Modi unveils Vision-2047 document to commemorate the 150th year of the India Meteorological Department (IMD) | PTI

VISION '47

IMD AIMS TO ACHIEVE 100% DETECTION OF ALL TYPES OF SEVERE WEATHER IN VILLAGES

The goal is to ensure zero deaths from severe weather events by enabling disaster managers, stakeholders and people to take early action based on warnings

AKHADAS GET RIGHT OF WAY TO SANGAM

PARAMITA GHOSH @ Prayagraj

THE day of the first Shahi Snan of Maha Kumbh, 2025, was, like always, primarily the day of the akhadas.

Shahi Snans are the red-letter days on the Kumbh timetable, and for the devout, who have come from far and wide to take a dip in the Sangam on the occasion of the first Shahi Snan of Makar Sankranti, there is a slight interruption in programme — when the Naga sadhus, their lithe bodies resplendent with ash and health, break into a run for the river.

For most, this is the marquee event of the mela, as sadhus wielding swords, maces, and tridents, blissed out on life, wave to the crowds, creating a few moments of intense connection as they move towards the Sangam. It is believed that the dip taken after the babas have bathed will yield great spiritual benefits.

The gesture of making way for others is part of the Kumbh tradition. "It all began in 1801 when fights broke out between the different sects and denominations, or the akhadas. On being petitioned to broker a peace, the Peshwa intervened and decreed the sequential order of the akhadas at the Shahi Snans," says Herambh Chaturvedi, a retired professor of Allahabad University. Ever since, that order — which gives the sects of Naga sanyasis the first right of way to the Sangam — has been enforced by the Akhada Parishad and followed by the different sects of ascetics and renunciants.

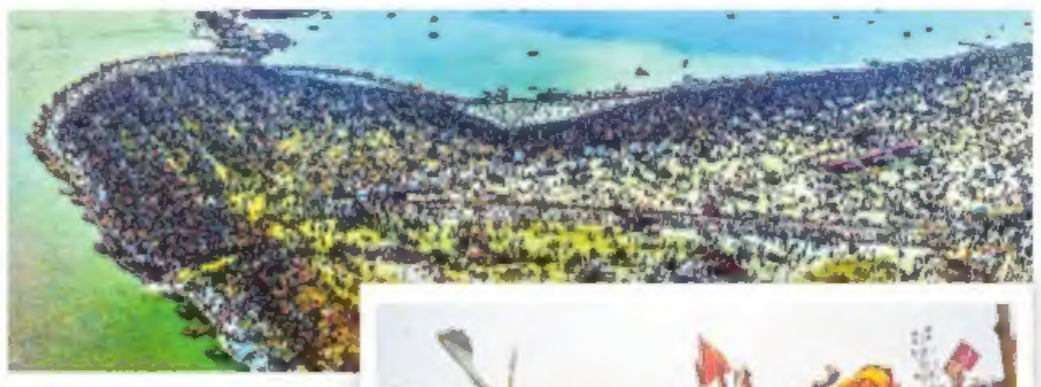
Tuesday's Shahi Snan passed without incident except for a brief period of chaos when devotees pushed through the security cordon and entered the area reserved for the sadhus.

Bathers started crowding the banks of the river by 4 am and the wave of excitement rippled through them at the first sighting of the sadhus. It seemed a carnival of spirits.

Sadhus began bathing at 5.15 am. Sri Panchayati Akhada Maha Nirvani and Sri Sambhu Panchawati Atal Akhada were among the early entrants.

Conch shells were blown, and dhol (drums) and tasha, nagare (kettle drums) were beaten, even as chants of 'Har Har Mahadev', 'Jai Ganga Maiyya ki Jai' and 'Har Har Gauri Shankar' rent the air.

MORE COVERAGE: P10



At least 1.38 crore people took holy dip on Makar Sankranti on Tuesday | PTI

EXPRESS READ

EAM: Spain will open a consulate in Bengaluru

Madrid: Spain will soon open a consulate in Bengaluru, EAM S Jaishankar said, calling it a "good sign" for deepening relations between both countries. Jaishankar, who is on a two-day visit to Spain, made these remarks on Monday, speaking to the Indian community here.

Outsourced TTD staffer steals temple gold, held

Tirupati: A 40-year-old outsourced employee of Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) was arrested from Lord Venkateswara Swamy's temple for allegedly stealing over half a kg of gold received from devotees as offerings to the deity, police said on Tuesday. **P7**

12 labs gutted in fire at bio research centre

Bengaluru: As many as 12 research laboratories were reportedly destroyed in an early morning accidental fire on Tuesday, at the Bangalore Bioinnovation Centre (BBC) — located in Electronics City Phase 1 here. No casualties have been reported. **P5**

No evidence, HC quashes case against Ragini, Ranka in 2020 drugs case

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

THE Karnataka High Court on Tuesday quashed criminal proceedings against accused actress Ragini Dwivedi and Prashant Ranka on the ground that police have not produced any material evidence to prove that they organised parties or sold drugs, except voluntary statements of the co-accused and chargesheet witnesses.

Justice Hemant Chandangoudar passed the order recently, while allowing the petitions filed by Ragini Dwivedi, accused No.2, and Prashant Ranka, accused No.4, questioning the legality of the proceedings.

The court said that continuing criminal proceedings against them would be an abuse of the legal process of law as there is no material produced by CCB to prove the charges against them. However, the court said the order would not come in the way of prosecuting the petitioners in accordance with the law, in view of the observations made in another writ petition involving the same issue.

The chargesheet was filed against them under the provisions of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act and IPC. The CCB, in its complaint, stated that they filed a suo motu complaint with Cottonpet police station. It was alleged in the complaint that they have information regarding the consumption of narcotics at parties organised at various locations frequented by celebrities, DJs, software engineers and others. **P5**

AFTER DRUBBING, DOs & DON'Ts

BCCI is possibly launching a pushback against its players after the embarrassing loss in Australia. After a review meeting in Mumbai to assess the team's performance, the cricketing bosses appear convinced that a dose of discipline is what the players require.

THE CURBS

- Wives/family can't stay more than a fortnight in a 45-day long tour
- Anything less than that, they stay only for a week
- All players to travel in team bus; no separate travel
- Players will bear luggage charges in excess of a 150kg limit
- Personal manager of head coach cannot stay in same hotel as players or travel in the team bus or enter the VIP box

Min Laxmi Hebbalkar injured in car accident

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Belagavi

WOMEN and Child Development Minister Laxmi Hebbalkar was seriously injured and her brother MLC Channaraj Hattiholi suffered an injury in the head in a road accident that took place at Ambadgatti village near Kittur at 5 am on Tuesday, when she was on her way back to Belagavi from Bengaluru in her official Toyota Innova car.

The driver lost control over the car while trying to avoid hitting a dog that was crossing the road and rammed into a road-side tree. According to sources, the car skidded off the National Highway onto the service road where it hit the tree at full speed and came to a stop abruptly. The car was completely damaged in the accident. Hebbalkar and Channaraj were sitting in the backseat, while her gunman was in the passenger's seat. Both the gunman and driver sustained minor injuries.

Hebbalkar and Channaraj were rushed to Vijaya Hospital in Belagavi. Orthopaedic surgeon Dr Ravi Patil, attending to Hebbalkar, said the minister has sustained compression fractures on L1 and L4 in the back and C-4, C-5 in the neck due to the impact of the accident. The minister needs at least a month's rest to recover from the injuries, he said, adding that she was responding well to the treatment. She will be discharged after a few days of observation, he added.

Channaraj sustained injuries in the head and some swelling in the brain. As his injuries were minor, he was discharged after treatment, Dr Patil said.

Belagavi SP Bhimashankar Guled said the minister had escort vehicles in the front and back of her official car when the accident occurred. When the car driver lost control, a truck was moving in between the minister's car and the front escort vehicle. **P4**

Minister Laxmi Hebbalkar's official car, which hit a tree near Kittur on Tuesday

Man behind India's cryogenic engine takes the helm at ISRO

Outgoing ISRO Chairman Dr S Somanath (right) greets new Chairman Dr V Narayanan in Bengaluru on Tuesday | X

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

DR V Narayanan, Distinguished Scientist (Apex Grade), took charge as the new Chairman of Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), Secretary, Department of Space, and Chairman, Space Commission, late on Monday.

ISRO's social media handle shared the details of Dr Narayanan taking over from S Somanath in the early hours of Tuesday. The change at the helm of India's premier space agency happened in Thiruvananthapuram, and the new chief is yet to take charge at the Bengaluru office. "He is scheduled to visit the Bengaluru office on Wednesday, soon after which he will be heading to Delhi for a series of meetings," ISRO officials said.

Narayanan is known as the rocket and spacecraft propulsion expert, who joined ISRO in 1984, and carries 40 years of work experience in the research organisation. Since January 2018, he was the director of Liquid Propulsion Systems Centre (LPSC) headquartered in Valiamala, Thiruvananthapuram, with a unit in Bengaluru.

As LPSC Director, he played a crucial role in the development of liquid, semi-cryogenic and cryogenic propulsion stages for launch vehicles, chemical and electric propulsion systems for satellites, control systems for launch vehicles and transducer development for propulsion system health monitoring. **P7**